

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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REJOICING IN TRIBULATION

BY REVEREND J. C. MACAULAY

Pastor, Wheaton Bible Church, Wheaton, Illinois

"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:1).

This is quite contrary to our conception of things; contrary to our accustomed efforts to shield those we love from temptation; and apparently contrary to the prayer which our Lord taught us, "Lead us not into temptation." If Scripture teaches us, however, to rejoice in temptations, there must be good reason; and it is ours to discover what are those things which should make us rejoice.

First, temptation discovers in us the evil which must be dealt with. In this chapter we are told the true nature of temptation. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed" (vs. 14). There are inducements to evil without; but it is when these inducements find something within our own selves that responds, that temptation becomes acute. Our Lord Jesus said, "the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30). There was no resident nature of sin in the Saviour to flow out in response to the inducements of the tempter. It is not so with us. Our own lust, or selfish desire, waits for such opportunities as temptation offers. Thus it is that the temptation becomes a discoverer of the evil in our own hearts.

Only a short time ago I received a piece of news which shook me tremendously. I was suddenly seized with a horrible and bitter jealousy. It was as if I had received a knock-out blow in the ring. The physical effect induced me to stretch myself out on the studio couch, and there I cried to God in the humiliation of the discovery that such jealousy was native to my heart. What release it was when the sanctifying Spirit of God cleansed all that bitterness and left me in the enjoyment of the sweet love of Christ!

Now we shall not rejoice in the evil that is so discovered by the surge of temptation; but we shall rejoice in the discovery of the evil, for only as it is discovered can it be dealt with and put away. How many a man has come from a rigid medical examination in which the beginnings of a malignant disease



REV. J. C. MACAULAY

was found and has said to his friends, "I am certainly glad that I went to the doctor and had that discovered." Did he rejoice that he was the victim of that ailment? By no means! But he was thankful that the X-ray had done its work, so making possible the cure before it was too late. Temptation, then, often acts as an X-ray to bring to light hidden conditions which require strenuous treatment at the hands of the Holy Spirit.

Again, temptations keep us in remembrance of our own weaknesses and drive us to God for help. When all went well with the children of Israel, when no enemies harassed them, and no plagues decimated them, they readily forgot God and came to rely on their own strength. But when misfortunes beset them and foes swept down upon them, they realized their need of God's mighty help and protection, and turned to Him. If we were left without temptation for very long

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Ten Saddest Passages in the Bible

FIVE FOR CHRISTIANS AND FIVE FOR LOST SINNERS

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

Part I — For Christians

1. "And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place: for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law" (Genesis 19:14). What could be sadder than that your Christianity should be counted a big joke by those who love you best, your own family and in-laws?

2. "And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him" (Matthew 17:16). These are the words of a father who brought his devil-possessed son to nine disciples while Jesus was up on the Mount of Transfiguration. Later these disciples asked, "Why could not we cast them out?" and Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief." How often are lost people around us disappointed because

we do not have the power of God, and we cannot deliver them from the power of Satan as God wants us to do. God forgive our unbelief!

3. "Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him" (Luke 11:5, 6). You have a boy unsaved but he does not listen to you! Perhaps it is a husband and as a Christian you have nothing to set before him. You may serve his meals, but you cannot feed his poor lost soul! Perhaps God put you, Christian man, in a place of business where you must rub elbows with an unsaved man; perhaps God put you there to win him, to save his soul from Hell. But if you have not won him you need to make this heart broken confession that Jesus told his disciples to make, "I have nothing to set before him!" Do you have the power of the Holy Spirit to take

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"The Lord Is My Shepherd; I Shall Not Want" - Ps. 23:1

BY DR. H. A. IRONSIDE

Someone has said, "Psalm 23 is the best loved of all the Psalms and it is the one least believed!" Do you really believe it? We all love it, do we not? Its beautiful imagery, its wonderfully idyllic poetry, its expressions of confidence in Jehovah, our Great Shepherd, appeal to every discriminating and Spirit-taught mind. But do we know the blessedness of resting upon its implied promises? When out of employment, laid aside by illness, or facing bereavement, are we able to say from the heart, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want"? Not want what? Another psalm answers, "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" (Psa. 34: 10). And again, "There is no want to them that fear Him" (Psa. 34: 9). Why, then, should the child of God ever be troubled and distressed by thoughts of future ill? God is over all and He is undertaking for us.

Since the Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want:

Rest — "He maketh me to lie down."

Refreshment — "He leadeth me beside the still waters."

Restoration — "He restoreth my soul."

Guidance — "He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness."

Confidence — "I will fear no evil."

Companionship — "Thou art with me."

Comfort — "Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Provision — "Thou preparest a table."

Unction — "Thou anointest my head."

Satisfaction — "My cup runneth over."

Protection — "Goodness and mercy shall follow me."

A Home at last — "I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

(The reading for March 28 in *The Continual Burnt Offering*, new book of devotional readings by Dr. H. A. Ironside.)

THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

"I beg leave to propose a short, clear and strong argument to prove the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The Bible must be the invention of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God.

1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels, for they neither would nor could make a book and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord,' when it was their own invention.

2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils, for they could not make a book which commands all duty, and forbids all sins, and condemns their own souls to hell for all eternity.

3. Therefore, draw the conclusion that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration.

— John Wesley.

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When Your Foot Is About to Slip

BY JOE H. HANKINS, D.D.

Pastor, First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas

(Largest Church in Arkansas)

(Preached at the First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas, Sunday morning, July 6, 1941, and stenographically reported.)

Text: "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Psa. 73:2, 3.

David is telling us of an experience through which he had passed, and an experience, I think, through which every child of God has at some time or another passed. David said when he looked around him and saw the prosperity of the wicked, when he saw how they seemed to get along in the world, when it seemed that everything their hands touched prospered, and that they didn't seem to have trouble like other people, it came very nearly tripping him up, and causing him to lose faith in God. "My steps had well nigh slipped."

I wonder how many of us have had that same experience. How many times have I heard men say, "It doesn't pay to try to be honest, it doesn't pay to try to live right. Look at those people who leave God out of their lives, never give God a thought, living in all sorts of sin and ungodliness, cheating and swindling in their business and living without any thought of God. Yet, they get along better than anybody." Did you ever hear it? And they begin immediately to feel that God isn't fair; that it isn't right; that God isn't just. At such times we ask ourselves the question: Does God really care — is He concerned after all?"

After David got his feet back on the rock again, after he regained his faith in God and was firmly and securely anchored again, he said that he was as ignorant as a beast when he thought those things about God. Listen to his words, "So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as

a beast before thee." The devil uses things like that to upset the faith of a child of God. People all over the world who are trying to serve the Lord are asking, "Why doesn't God stop some of the things that are going on? Why doesn't God stop Hitler with all of his slaughter and the suffering and devastation he is causing in the world?" The devil will try to use every misfortune that comes to upset our faith in God and cause us to accuse God foolishly. Some people act as though they think that because we are trying to serve God, He ought to deliver them from all trouble and never let them suffer any more — give them an easy time the rest of their lives simply because they are trying to serve Him. But if God did that we would all be in the position of which the devil accused Job when he said that he was serving God for pay. And instead of having people that serve God because He is God, people that honor God because He is God, people that worship God because of what He is, and people that follow God because they love God, love righteousness, right and holiness, we would have the whole world running after God for pay. That isn't the crowd that God wants. If, when a person joins the church, he never had any more sorrow, no more trouble or heartaches, we would have all the devil's crowd in the church before next Sunday night. God isn't looking for hired servants. God is seeking children that will love Him because He is love, worship Him because He is God, that adore Him for what He is, that have faith in Him not for what He does, but for what He is, and would rather "suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." That is the kind of people God wants.

I said, every time some misfor-

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Pages From a Revival Diary

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

SUNDAY, JULY 20 — In the Freeport, Illinois, Union Revival today when the afternoon service was over a dear Christian lady who had been deeply burdened for her brother, 58 years old, brought him to meet me. He had heard the sermon on "What Will Happen When Jesus Comes," and his heart was as tender as a child's. He came forward openly Sunday night to make his profession of faith public.

What a blessed time Sunday night! The crowd packed the lower floor and filled most of the balcony on three sides of the Odd Fellows' Temple. God gave the most moving service thus far. Of the ten people who came forward, 8 had never made a profession of faith of any kind. And better yet, of the ten, six were grown men. We had a hard pull for the first few verses of the invitation song. But God moved the hearts of Christians to do personal work, there was a freedom of the Spirit and the power of God became more and more obvious.

Should we close the service? "Let's make a test and prove God. One more verse, and if no one else comes we will close." But I saw some one motion toward the balcony on my right and I looked; there was a young lady in white, deeply moved, with two Christian friends standing beside her. She held her hand high, and I knew she meant to take Christ as her Saviour. "Do you want to come down in front of this crowd and let

of the auditorium came with shining face to trust the Lord. A little later up in the balcony on my left I saw a young man who had been saved last week. He had brought his buddy and with a little encouragement his friend left the balcony, came down the stairs to the platform, and around in front of the speaker.

A man very active in the meeting had recently given up tobacco, had brought his sister to the service. When others spoke to her she would not come, but when Mr. Mohr approached her, in a moment she came to trust the Saviour, the first soul he had ever won.

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them know you are taking Christ as your Saviour?" I asked, and she did. We sang on and others came.

Raymond McAfee, the young song leader, senior in Wheaton College, leaves the platform and soon comes leading a man to claim Christ. The man is weeping so he can hardly see so Raymond leads him by one arm and his wife, with shining eyes and tears on her face leads him by the other hand. Again the song leader goes to speak to an older man. The wife protests "But we don't believe this way in our church," but when the husband came to take my hand and say firmly, "Sure! Sure!" to every question about his acceptance of Christ, it is only a moment until his wife comes weeping to join him. What a happy sight!

After the benediction Pastor H. L. Newell of the United Brethren Church brought a young couple to the platform to talk to me. Kneeling on the high platform so I could show them the scriptures, we got the whole thing settled that salvation was altogether of God's grace, and for everyone who trusts in Christ. How humble the man was! He said, "I have wanted to get this settled a long, long time, but being a Catholic I wasn't sure how it would turn out if I left my church." To my surprise he saw instantly the clear plan of salvation, that God did the saving and the keeping of all who would put their trust in Jesus Christ, while his wife, a back-slidden Protestant, had difficulty in seeing that she could not save herself by good works. But when she did see it she broke down with tears and gladly claimed the Lord, trusting Him to do the keeping as well as the saving.

MONDAY, JULY 21 — I had a woozy head after driving 100 miles and preaching four times on Sunday, but many blessings of the campaign were reported today.

Two weeks ago when I had spoken on prayer a woman came weeping to ask me to pray for her unsaved father at Fennimore, Wisconsin. We prayed and she promised to write him and send him the booklet, "What Must I Do to be Saved?" of which some 3,000 have been distributed in this revival campaign. Tonight she came, all smiles to tell me, "Both my father and my mother read the booklet 'What Must I Do to be Saved?' and were converted and have signed their names to the decision blank. Shall I bring that blank to you or shall I keep it?" I promised to write her father and mother a happy and encouraging letter. What a difference in this dear woman's happy face today and her sad face two weeks ago!

Tonight, as we make the 100 mile trip back to Wheaton for special business tomorrow, Pastor Newell told me of another result of the revival and of my preaching on prayer. The U. B. Church has a debt of \$9,400 and yet it had outgrown its Sunday School quarters. Agreeing to raise as much as was necessary outside the church membership, Pastor Newell led the people in adding a third story to the Sunday School annex to relieve the over-crowded condition in Sunday School. Then he had been calling on business men raising money by personal solicitation. But the pastor and others came to feel that was not the best way to raise the money and after prayer the pastor and two or three others had agreed that if God sent in \$25.00, unsolicited, for building fund during last week, he would make no more personal calls on outsiders for money. Not \$25.00, but \$30.00 came in be-

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sinners the Bread of Life? If not, you need to implore God, the great Friend who has plenty of the Bread of Life, until He shall arise and give you all you need. Powerless Christians — how sad, how wicked to be powerless, when God promises to give the Holy Spirit to all who ask Him (Luke 11:13).

4. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherefore shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13). How many Christians have lost the saving salt of Christianity? They have no power of the Holy Spirit. Like Lot they can live in a city and yet let the whole town go to hell. They make alibis, saying, "Sinners are so hard these days" or "You can't get sinners to go to church now." But the real trouble is that the salt has lost its savor. Such Christianity, the kind that does not win souls, may be orthodox in doctrine, may be clean in life, but Jesus said it is "good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men." Beloved, clean lives and orthodox doctrine will never save sinners. You need the saving salt, the power of the Holy Spirit!

5. "Refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul" (Psalm 142:4). I tried to comfort a weeping mother over her 12-year-old daughter who had died, and discovered she had never spoken to her daughter about her soul and did not know she had been converted two years. If no one else had cared more than that mother her girl would have been in Hell instead of Heaven. How many lost people will witness against Christians when they face God and say, "No man cared for my soul!"

Part II — For Lost Sinners

1. "Ye will not turn unto me that ye might have life" (John 5:40). It is not that sinners *can not* come but that they *will not* come. This silly talk about, "I do not believe a loving God would send a sinner to Hell" is the alibi of wicked hearts who do not want to come to Christ and deliberately refuse His mercy.

2. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate" (Matthew 23:37, 38). The same desolation that came to Jerusalem because she neglected her king will come to every nation that forgets God and the tender heart of Christ yearns over all the sinners in the world and would long ago have gathered them, "Even as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings" but sinners would not allow Him!

3. "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; For that they hated knowl-

fore Sunday! The pastor was so moved by this blessing that he called the whole church to prayer in the midst of his morning church service and after prayer they decided to ask God for \$50.00 to come in unsolicited, for this special building need this week. Then Bro. Newell preached the rest of his sermon and before he got out of the building \$51.00 had been put into his hand for the new floor of Sunday School rooms and by Monday night more than \$70.00 had been handed him at the union revival services, unsolicited. Pastor Newell said, "I have made up my mind that when we want anything from God we will just call the whole church together on Sunday morning and pray, whether I have time to preach or not. I have found that the way to get things is to ask God for them!"

WHEN YOUR FOOT IS ABOUT TO SLIP

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tune comes the devil will try to use it to upset our faith in God and cause us to doubt God. Let sorrow come and you can't understand, many times you ask the question: Why? Maybe the father has been taken away from the wife and children by the hand of death and you are left dazed and stunned by the blow. The devil will come immediately and insinuate that God isn't fair; God isn't just. And, if you are not careful, the first thing you know, you have listened to the devil's lies and your feet are on slippery places.

When you are struggling to make ends meet and to keep the wolf away from the door, and you look around you and the ungodly crowd seem to have everything they want — their children are not deprived of anything, and your

edge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 1:24-32). These are the words of Wisdom, "Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the street" and the above is the solemn warning of Wisdom. There will come a time to every lost sinner when Wisdom will laugh at his calamity and mock when his fear comes; when sinners will call and no one will answer because they have hated knowledge and did not choose the fear of the Lord because they would not listen to His counsel, and despised his reproof. I tell you solemnly that sin is a fearful business and to come to a calamity with no God and face death without a Saviour is the most awful fear and sorrow that any soul can ever know!

4. "But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" (Luke 12:20). The man who makes money but neglects his soul is a fool. When he is ready to enjoy the fruits of his labours then God will say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee." Poor man who faces the accusing finger of God and learns at last that though he made money, was rich, or famous, or successful, still God says he is a fool! Sinner, don't neglect your poor lost soul for anything else in the world but be saved today!

5. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me: I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear" (Isaiah 1:11-15).

This is what God says to church-going people, church members, to those who have been baptized or confirmed, who go through the forms of religion. God says He hates your gifts, that your prayers are an abomination, that He has no joy when you tread His courts, that your religious form is iniquity, even the solemn meeting and that your appointed feasts and services God hates. They trouble him and weary Him! When you pray He closes His ears and will not hear. Oh, sinner, when will you learn that God wants no worship except from contrite hearts who confess their sins and trust in Jesus Christ and worship Him only in spirit and in truth? Have you been born again? If not, then this Scripture applies to you, for all your so-called morality, and despite your abominable self-righteous worship. Nothing can please God until the heart comes in penitence to surrender to Jesus Christ and love him absolutely first and trust Him wholly for salvation.

going to keep your feet on solid ground in a time like this? How did David keep his footing?

1. He went into the sanctuary.

David said, "I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood." I tell you, beloved, there isn't anything in a Christian's life that can take the place of worship at the house of God. That is one thing a Christian cannot get along without. Some say, "I can worship God as well at home as at the house of God." No, you can't do it. If you think you can, the devil has deceived you and your feet are on slippery ground. Yes, you can meet God in other places, but God has always had an appointed time, an appointed day of worship and a medium of approach. When Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden, God appointed a place at the east gate of the garden and set an angel there with a flaming sword, not to keep Adam and Eve away from the tree of life, but to keep the way to the tree of life open that they might have access to it through God's appointed means.

When Israel wandered in the wilderness God told Moses to build a tabernacle and set it up every time they stopped so that the people of God could bring their sacrifices and have access to God. When Israel settled in the land God said, "Build a temple." And God gave the outline, the specifications and plans for the most magnificent and most wonderful building man has ever erected. It was a place where God's people were to meet God in worship. He has always had a time and place for worship. Yes, you can meet God anywhere. I meet God so many times in unexpected places—sometimes out on the highway driving along alone Jesus comes and takes a seat beside me, and we ride along together in wonderful fellowship. God has met with us so many times in our little family circle at home in the evenings when all is quiet and the family sits together to read out of God's Word and kneels to pray. God comes down and meets with us there. But I want to tell you there is no place on earth where God gets as close and is as real as in the house of God. Jesus said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." I tell you the truth, if I had had to be without my church for six months I do not believe to save my life I could keep from backsliding, and I don't think you can do it either. God meets His people at the church. David said, "When I went into the sanctuary of God; then I understood — then I got a new revelation of God, a new grip on God, then I got my feet on a rock again, in the house of God." That is the reason it grieves my heart so to see members of the church staying away from the services, and churches closing up on Sunday nights. I want to tell you this church will be open as long as I am pastor if I am the only one here, but, thank God, I will not be here by myself — some of you will always stand by me and be here with me. By the help of God we will keep the light trimmed and burning when the darkness gets the deepest. That is my determination before God — we will never close. Oh, in this day how we need to realize that we can not get along without the worship at the house of God!

II. What did David find at the house of God? He realized that he had been over-estimating the prosperity and happiness of the wicked. They were not as happy as he thought they were. The grass always looks greenest away from you and you think the other fellow is the happiest and getting along the best. But if you could look down in his heart, you wouldn't change places with him for the world. They seem happy, but they are seeking

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something that will satisfy and never find it anywhere. David said he had been over-estimating the prosperity and happiness of the wicked crowd, but that after all it was like a dream and one day they would awake to the truth that they were deceived; one day they would be disillusioned. David realized that their prosperity was only in material things when there is a deeper need in the human life than material things can possibly supply.

2. He came to know there is something better than material prosperity. O God, when will the human race learn that life consists "not in the abundance of the things which a man possessest?" When will we learn that if you could give man everything on earth; if you could pile at his feet all the money, all the honor, all the position and glory the world has to offer, in the end it would be like Alexander the Great who, at the age of thirty-two, wept because he had no more worlds to conquer.

3. David came to realize how greatly blessed he was. He realized that fellowship with God was better than anything the world had to offer. He said, "Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel and afterwards receive me to glory." O the hope that is an anchor to the soul — that fellowship with the Lord down through life — "joy unspeakable, and full of glory," and the guiding hand of God, and at the end received into glory. David realized, too, that God was not a God who took no interest in the struggles, sorrows and heartaches of His people, but a God that is always present with them. Not only always present with them but always present to help — that God will deliver His people. It may be like it was with the infidel who said to the deacon, "I planted my wheat on Sunday, mowed it on Sunday, and threshed it on Sunday, and I made a better crop than anybody in the country." This deacon-farmer said to him, "Yes, neighbor, I have watched you do that, but let me remind you, neighbor, that God doesn't pay off in full in the fall." Truly Solomon was right when he said, "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked."

4. David discovered that the prosperity of the wicked was fleeting. O child of God the material things of life are only temporary! He said it was like a dream — you can have them for a little while then they are gone. That is what influenced the choice of Moses when he chose to "suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." For all the world's pleasure is "for a season." The world's pleasure, wealth and glory is like a bubble the human race is chasing — like trying to find the "pot of gold" at the end of the rainbow. But the wealth we find in Jesus Christ is something that will last forever. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal." It isn't just for a season, but "when the battle's over we shall wear a crown in the New Jerusalem." We shall be received into glory with Him and share His glory, as Jesus prayed in John 17 — "The glory I had with the Father before the world was."

5. David learned that there is something better than prosperity. He realized that spiritual things and the fellowship with God and the "joy unspeakable and full of glory" that comes from God — the privilege of walking with God is the thing the world not only can not offer, but cannot take away from you; that the God that walked with Daniel into the lion's den was his God and that in due time He would take care of the ungodly. "Then understood I their end." He also understood that in due time God's saints shall come into their own. And in that realization David reached out his hand in the dark and took hold of the strong hand of a mighty God, and God placed his feet again on solid rock, established his going's put a new song in his mouth and new strength

in his life. "He is the same yesterday, today and forever."

Beloved, if you and I live to see the day when everything is gone — when the foundations have crumbled and everything is falling in just remember that the thing that put David's feet on the rock was that he still had God, that he could always be assured of His guiding hand and, in the end, would be received into glory. In that consolation and in the glorious hope and conquering faith he put his hand out in the dark and took hold of one from whom we cannot be separated and in whose strength we cannot fail. Is it dark around you today? Are you groping in uncertainty? Are your feet on slippery places? Reach out your hand in the dark and you will feel the grip of His mighty hand.

I remember when I was in a meeting in Sherman, Texas, I was staying in the home of the pastor. One night about two o'clock in the morning a terrible storm arose, and we were awakened by the crash of thunder, the flash of lightning and the fury of the storm. I heard the cry in the adjoining room of a little four-year-old curly-headed girl. She was calling, "Daddy, Daddy," and after a while I heard the father's voice say, "Sweetheart, what is it?" Then I heard a little trembling voice say, "Daddy, reach me your hand, I am afraid." In a moment I heard a quiet little voice say, "Daddy, it is all right now. Daddy, I am not afraid of the storm now." Friend, listen, as you walk through the valley of the shadows, reach out your hand in the dark and you will find a mighty hand that will take the fear out of life. Stay with God. Stay with God in an hour like this, and your feet will be on solid rock. Job found that hand. We hear him say in the midst of the wreck of everything, "I know that my redeemer liveth; and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after the skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh I shall see God." Then we hear him saying as he holds that unseen but sure and certain hand in the dark, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." Don't let the devil lie to you about God. He will never, never fail. "That soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose, I will not, I will not desert to its foes. That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, I'll never, never, no never forsake."

Paul and Silas found that unseen hand in Philippi's jail and through its comforting and strengthening touch were able, while their hands and feet were in stocks and their backs bleeding, to pray and sing praises to God till the foundations of the prison were shaken and the prison doors were opened, and their bands were loosed. Yes, child of God, "My God shall supply all your needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

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—
"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:
That whosoever believeth in him

should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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John 3:14-17

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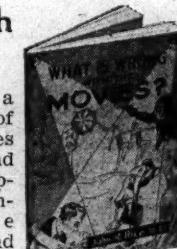
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Rejoicing in Tribulation

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE)

we should conclude that the work of sanctification was well-nigh, if not altogether, finished; that we had won the final victory and had no further need of watchfulness. But when temptation sweeps in like a sudden surge, or when it keeps persistently dogging our footsteps like an enemy that will not be shaken, then we realize how weak we are, and we look for the way of escape outside our own selves. Then it is that we appreciate such a verse as, "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Prov. 18:10).

Dr. John R. Rice in one of his evangelistic sermons describes the difference between the jack rabbit and the cottontail rabbit of Texas. The jack rabbit is very confident. When the hound gets on his trail, he throws up his head, stretches his legs and challenges the hound to run it out. If the hound is swift and determined, the confidence of the jack rabbit will end in disaster. The little cottontail is of a different spirit. He knows he never could run it out with a hound, so he looks for the first place that offers refuge; and there under a rock he will be found shaking and fearful, but safe. Temptations are the hounds which drive us to our refuge, and teach us the security of Christ, our way of escape.

Temptations are always new opportunities for victory, and occasions for the display of the all-sufficient grace of God. When we are looking in dependence to the Lord we can be very sure that "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19), and we shall rejoice in the triumph, realizing even now the truth of God's promise, "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet" (Rom. 16:20).

A soldier who gets no further than the barrack-square is only a tin soldier. It is the one who has been in the thick of the battle that can talk about victory. Triumphs are only experienced in conflict. If then we would be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us," we must know His power on the field of battle.

The Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians says, "Thanks be unto God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ" (II Cor. 2:14). Moffatt's translation uses the phrase, "maketh my life a constant pageant of triumph." The picture in the verse is of a victorious general riding in his chariot of triumph through the capital city, with all his captives of war chained behind to add glory to the triumphant procession. God is that mighty victor, and Paul delights to think of himself as one of God's captives, an evidence of the divine triumph over Satan. Every time a victory over temptation is won in our lives we become anew trophies of God's victory.

Already we have three reasons for rejoicing in temptations. First, they discover the evil in our hearts that must be dealt with. Second, they keep us in remembrance of our dependence on God, so saving us from fatal self-confidence. Third, they become occasions for the display of the grace of God and enhance the glory of Him Who triumphs gloriously in our lives. These do not exhaust the reasons for rejoicing. Temptations have a definite ministry in the perfecting

of our character. "Count it all joy," says the Holy Spirit through James, "when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

Young Christians are apt to be impatient in the first throes of temptation, forgetting that conversion is but the beginning of a process by which they are to be fashioned into the likeness of Christ. This very impatience shows a need of the discipline of temptations so that the Christian will learn not to be panicky in face of any danger, but with patient endurance will keep "looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

Moreover, the light which temptations cast on our own hearts tends to make us more patient with others. It is not untempted men who can sympathize with the tempted and the erring, but rather the one who has known the force of temptation, has seen the evil of his own heart, and has bravely resisted. Robert Burns, the Scottish poet, has written:

"Then gently scan your brother man;

Still gentler sister woman; Though they may gang and kennan wrang,

To step aside is human."

It is in the crucible of temptation that the gentle spirit is perfected. Our Lord Himself is the peer

amongst the tempted. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). Through temptation He arrived at His perfect understanding of frail man. "It is the way the Master went, shall not the servant tread it still?"

Besides ministering to the perfecting of our character, temptation plays a big part in fitting us for ministry. In our time of difficulty and perplexity we do not turn to the one who has himself been sheltered and pampered, but to the one who can listen to our story and say, "I know. I have been there." Our Lord Himself was made perfect through the things He suffered, and especially "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). Charles Cowman has given us this story:

An American tourist in Italy stood watching an Italian lumberman engaged in his occupation on the banks of a swift mountain stream. The lumberman would occasionally jab his hook into a log and carefully draw it aside. The American interestedly asked the lumberman why he pulled out but an occasional log and let all the rest go by, since they all looked alike.

"They look alike," said the lum-

berman, "but they are not alike. The logs which I let pass have grown in the valley where they were protected from high winds and storms. Their grain is coarse; they are good only for lumber. But these logs grew on the mountain; since they were saplings they have been lashed and buffeted by the winds, and in their struggle with the weather they have developed a fine grain and grown strong. These we save for choice work. They are not lumber." Here is a reason to rejoice in temptation. If you are being especially harassed, it simply means that the Lord has chosen you for choice work. Endure, then, with rejoicing, and anticipate the high service for which the Lord is preparing you.

Temptation endured brings reward. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him" (verse 12). To endure temptation is to signify that we have put the love of the Lord above those desires of the heart to which temptation makes its appeal.

Finally, then, temptation is a test of love; and the promise of the crown is to those who love the Lord, to those who sink their own desires in love for Him.

I have suggested six reasons for

obeying the Scriptural injunction to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations. Let me in closing insist that temptation is not sin, as some sensitive souls imagine. I do not think I sinned that day when I was suddenly overwhelmed with a sense of awful jealousy. The sin of the heart was revealed, but there could be no act of sin when I refused to harbor it, but fled to the way of escape, into the name of the Lord, my high tower. Some one has drawn the difference thus, "It is one thing to have the crows flying over your head, and another thing to have them build nests in your hair." Temptation may leap upon you, but it is your privilege to resist it in the name of the Lord and to cast it from you as a thing accursed. The danger is always in nursing the temptation. If you do that it will be brought into too close contact with the evil desires of your heart, and by it lust will conceive and bring forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. Safety lies in resistance by flight, by an immediate hiding in our Rock.

"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin:
Each vict'ry will help you
Some other to win;
Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus,
He'll carry you through."

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